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JOHN PURDUE GRAY, M. D., LL. D.

By Professor WILLIS G. TUCKER, M. D., Albany Medical College.

John Purdue Gray was born, of American parents, in Half Moon, Centre county, Pennsylvania, August 6, 1825, and received his early education at the common school in his native place and at the Bellefonte Academy. From the academy he went to Dickinson College, from which institution he received the degree of A. M. in 1846, and to the University of Pennsylvania, from which he was graduated in medicine in 1848, Professor Rochester, of Buffalo, being a member of the same class. Immediately after graduation he entered the Blockley Hospital, in Philadelphia, as resident physician under Dr. Benedict, the chief of staff, and in 1851 was appointed third assistant physician in the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, where Dr. Benedict had become superintendent upon the death of Amariah Brigham, in 1849. His subsequent advancement was most rapid. In 1852, he was made second assistant, and in 1853, upon Dr. Benedict's resignation on account of ill-health, first assistant and acting superintendent of the asylum, when but twenty-eight years of age, and the same year he was appointed medical superintendent of the Michigan State Lunatic Asylum and prepared the plans for the new buildings at Kalamazoo. The managers at Utica, however, conscious of his ability and efficiency, prevailed upon him to return, and in 1854 he resigned his position in Michigan and entered upon his notable career as medical superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, at the same time succeeding Dr. T. Romeyn Beck as editor of the *American Journal of Insanity*, of which he had been the assistant editor in 1852. This journal had been established in 1844 by Dr. Amariah Brigham, the first superintendent of the Utica asylum, and was the first and, for many years, the only journal of its kind in the world.

Within the limits of a brief memoir it will be impossible to do more than briefly state some of the most important events in Dr. Gray's life, and name some of the positions of honor and influence which he held. For many years he was professor of psychological medicine and medical jurisprudence in the Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York, and from 1876 was professor of psychological medicine in the Albany Medical College. He served as president of the Medical Society of the State of New York in 1868; of the psychological section of the International Medical Congress, which met at Philadelphia in 1876; of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, and of the New York State Medical Asso-

ciation in 1885. He was an honorary member of the *Società Freni-rica Italiana*, *Société Medico-Psychologique* of Paris, British Medico-Psychological Association, and of the American Archaeological Society. By appointment of the Governor he acted as commissioner for establishing the Willard Asylum and the State asylum at Buffalo. Hamilton College conferred upon him the degree of LL. D. in 1874, and he was the recipient of many other honors.

As an expert in criminal and civil cases involving questions as to sanity, his services were in constant demand, and on several occasions were of great value to the State. From President Lincoln he received frequent commissions to examine criminals alleged to be insane, and after Lincoln's assassination he was called upon to examine Payne, one of Booth's fellow-conspirators. In the case of Guiteau, the murderer of President Garfield, Dr. Gray directed the policy of the government in the prosecution, and suggested the course of the examination. In the Vanderbilt and Fillmore will cases and the murder trials of Bigot, Buckhout, Walworth and Dillon his testimony had great weight and attracted much attention.

Dr. Gray delivered frequent addresses and read many papers before scientific societies, and was a contributor to many journals besides his own. Among the more important of his papers are the following: "Insanity and its Relations to Medicine;" "General Paresis or Incomplete Progressive Paralysis;" "Insanity, its Dependence upon Physical Diseases;" "Thoughts on the Causation of Insanity;" "Pathology of Insanity;" "Lesions found in the Brain in Insanity;" "Mental Hygiene;" "Reparation of Brain-tissue after Injury," and "Hyoscymia in Insanity." A writer of great originality of view, and a master of the art of concise expression the influence of his writings was widely felt. In matters relating to the administration of public charities, and particularly asylum management, lunacy legislation and kindred topics, he was an acknowledged authority, and among American alienists he was a recognized leader. Possessed of strong convictions and a decided will he did more than any other man on this side of the Atlantic to improve the condition of the insane, and to extend the means of treatment in insanity, which he regarded as a physical disease. The medical care of patients became with him, therefore, a matter of the highest importance. He believed that an asylum should be a hospital in which the inmates should be nursed and treated as sick people. He never adopted but always combated the views of the English asylum superintendents concerning the use of mechanical restraints, and his views were generally adopted in this country, and prevented the employment in American asylums of the more severe

methods made use of abroad. One of the first improvements which he introduced at Utica was the removal of the violent and destructive class from the confinement in which they had been kept to the light and cheerful surroundings of the wards, while many were relieved from restraint, and given an opportunity to exercise in the open air, and even brought to the common table under proper restrictions. He was the first to introduce steam-heating and artificial methods of ventilation by steam-driven fans into American asylums, and to him belongs the credit of inaugurating in this country the microscopic study of the brain, early begun and systematically pursued in the Utica asylum, which under him became a veritable school of instruction, and furnished a larger number of men thoroughly educated for service in this field than any other in the United States. He visited Europe in 1879 and inspected many of the public hospitals and asylums for the insane, in which he found that many of the improvements introduced by him had been adopted, and he returned with the conviction that American superintendents had little to learn from their European brethren. As might naturally be expected, a man so pronounced in his views and fearless in the expression of them made some enemies, and Dr. Gray was often bitterly attacked by those who differed from him in opinion or sought to displace him from the position which he so long and so ably filled, but he defended himself in every instance with the energy and boldness which characterized all his acts and with the success which never deserted him.

Personally, Dr. Gray was a man of elegant address and dignified appearance, whose manner inspired confidence, and commanded respect. He was a man of even temper and courteous demeanor, whose many endearing qualities secured the respect of his friends and the love and admiration of his intimate associates. He was domestic in his tastes, a kind father and a loving husband, his home-life being singularly happy. He married, September 6, 1854, Miss Mary B. Wetmore, a daughter of the late Edmund A. Wetmore, of Utica, who survives him with three children, Dr. John P. Gray, Jr., William and Miss Cornelia Gray. Three other children died in infancy. Upon religious subjects Dr. Gray held clear and decided views, and for many years he was a consistent member of the Reformed church.

Dr. Gray's end was hastened, and his health, comfort and usefulness during the last four years of his life impaired, by the murderous attack made upon him in 1882 by Henry Remshaw, afterwards adjudged insane and confined in the Asylum for Insane Criminals at Auburn. Dr. Gray was sitting in his private office on the evening of

March fifteen, when Remshaw, in an insane frenzy, shot him in the face. His escape from instant death was remarkable, and although he so far recovered that the wound left little outward mark to indicate its severity, the injury seriously affected his nasal breathing, left an almost constant neuralgia, and inflicted upon his nervous system a shock which he never outlived. He resisted with fortitude the inroads which disease was gradually making upon his system, but his strength was seriously impaired, and the burdens of his position exhausted him as never before. His friends became alarmed at his condition, and a leave of absence being given him, he spent the winter of 1885-86 at Thomasville, Georgia, and seemed for a time to be benefited by the change; but the gain was only temporary, and the succeeding summer he went with his youngest son, and daughter, and some intimate friends to Europe, and spent some time at Carlsbad, but on his return the attempt to again take up his work proved too much for his strength, and he rapidly failed. He died at Utica, of Bright's disease, November 29, 1886, in the sixty-second year of his age, the end being hastened by a severe cold contracted while on a journey to Baltimore, which resulted in bronchitis. The funeral services took place December second, and were attended by delegates from numerous societies and representatives of all the professions. Dr. Gray leaves behind him the memory of a useful life devoted to the promotion and diffusion of knowledge and to philanthropic works—a life not of the longest, measured by years, but, gauged by the good accomplished, far exceeding in duration that of the majority of men. His name and good deeds will be remembered so long as ability and genius shall be esteemed and integrity and philanthropy revered among men.



